

## Drum Circle Facilitation & Hand Drumming Ideas



I'm Shannon Ratigan. I'm a percussionist with over 35 years of experience, all genre's. I'm available for session work, hand drumming performances, fill in band gigs, music teacher, web lessons for all ages. I worked full time as an actor for 14 years. I still get a few [jobs](#), but a lot less work now that I'm in Missouri. I basically was auditioning constantly, I needed an outlet for the stress that came with that. Here's a page I made a while back.

### [Memory Lane Actor Page](#)

I also teach beginner to intermediate djembe or doumbek lessons & facilitation training in the St. Louis area. A few pointers on hand technique, we start out a few rhythms and away we go. Use your drum, or I provide them. It can be just a drumming lesson, facilitator training, or both. (Adding an additional person is \$10 more.) If you would like drum circle facilitation lessons, I offer that as well. I can combine the two if you like.  
(Page last updated January 2018)

"The Netflix For Active Seniors" (A web series with a variety of [healthy](#) fun activities to learn.)

Here's one of their promos from YouTube. It's 2 minutes, my bit is at the end.

## Spiro100 Network Promo



This is an online job I did for seniors and beginner drummers a while back, its 8 fun drumming lessons designed with seniors in mind. All 8 of them made the cut, so it's pretty good by Hollywood standards. Each lesson, (other than the intro) is about 20 minutes in length, and has about 4 rhythms to learn from different cultures. They are all stand alone lessons, so you can watch just one, or watch them all. Drumming becomes accessible to everyone regardless of skill level, even if they have never drummed before in their lives.

Drumming is accessible to everyone regardless of skill level, even if you have never drummed before in your life. It's just a matter of finding the right drum for you.

I don't know the exact rates to watch them, but the link to Spiro100.com is below. Please visit it for more information. It is never too late to learn something fun, entertaining, and perhaps even life changing. They also have some other interesting activities like chair bellydance, chair yoga, and many other choices. It's designed for senior centers, and etc. but I think individuals of any age can still do it. I have no idea what it costs, but I think it's reasonable. Anyway, here's the link:

Paste this into your browser, <http://www.spiro100.com/> or click the link below to see them all:

[Spirofit100 Drumming Videos Link](#)

If you're interested in an easy way of learning to drum at home on your TV, do check out these hand drumming videos.

Here's a few of my other pages for drum circles with specific groups:

**Drum circles with elders and seniors. Also, Info and tips for facilitators:**



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[Drum Circles With Seniors Page](#)

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**Drum circles at Weddings & Drum Circle Receptions**

[Wedding Drum Circles & Drum Circle Receptions Page](#)

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**Drum Circles For Kids**

[Children's Drum Circles & Drumming With Kids](#)

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**Spiritual and church drum circles - (Saint Louis County area.):**

[Spiritual & Church Drum Circles Page](#)

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**Drum Circles in Craft Brewerys, Casual Drinking Establishments, & Public Events**

[Drum Circles in Nightclubs, Pubs, & Casual Drinking Events](#)

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Visit the live bellydancing drum circle music page:

[Bellydancers Only Music Page Link](#)

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**Small Business, Team Building Or Company Drum Circles**

It's becoming much more common. Have a drum circle for your buisness, company, or group of friends.

[Team Building Drum Circles - Corporate Drumming, and small business page link](#)

Drum circles are an excellent activity for any group, and for all ages. But especially as a tool for team building. Letting people express themselves through drumming and then seeing how that can build to a musical performance is at the heart of team effort. Learning to let go of self involvement in order to synchronize with others is the essence.

Not everyone can or will play the drums the same way, just as they don't do their jobs exactly the same way. And those slight differences, if done from each person's strengths, are what make the musical result magical. People learn that playing/working together is something that is its own reward because the results are beyond what any individual can do.

Drum circles can be extremely effective for companies that want to enhance the generation of new ideas and better team work. When people discover that they can collectively produce a good sound without any musical training or background, they start to realize that they can be more effective at work by putting their heads together and working as a team.

Also, drumming uses the brain in a different pattern than the linear thought process that is usually needed in the work environment. For example, when suggesting a drum circle rhythm, I like to vocalize the first few measures before we play it. The logical analytical side of the brain can process it quicker, which then frees up the creative intuitive side. People can then play what they feel, rather than over thinking it.  
ie: The Heartbeat drum rhythm: Boom Boom chicka-chicka Boom Boom (pause, & repeat)

A drum circle brings the group to a more open mental and psychological process, which can be carried over to the production of new and better ways of working. An excellent tool to kick off any kind of brainstorming session and optimize the quantity and quality of new ideas. In other words, your team improvises and is more creative.

Click the link below for more detailed information on having a corporate, company, or a small business drum circle. Please keep in mind that an assistant needs to be hired for larger groups, and that costs more.

### [Team Building, Corporate, Company, & Small Business Drum Circles](#)

Drum circle pricing and rates: Average cost, or ideas what to charge.

[Facilitated Drum Circle Pricing and Rates page link](#)

The intent of my page is to offer facilitated drum circles, but also to share ideas and suggestions for others. Briefly put, drum circle facilitation by me is taking a group of people who (mostly) have never touched a drum before in their lives, and I make a band out of them. They all discover they can indeed make music, and in the process even overcome inner social fears. We make up spontaneous rhythms, as well as play various culturally specific rhythms from around the world, all done by using only musical cues. It is very organic, and every drum circle is different depending on the group's dynamic. I hope my page helps you to enjoy drumming more.

I facilitate drum circles, but I'm also available to work as a percussionist for band gigs, as a performer with singer songwriters, or as a solo percussionist for just about anything. From bellydancers, firespinners, weddings, spiritual gatherings, yoga, spoken word, and teaching, or just about anything where you need a drummer. I'm open to last minute fill ins, and requests, as I can rely on classical training and experience to pick up music, & rhythms by ear.



When Inquiring About Having A Facilitated Drum Circle, please provide me some of the particulars, & what you have in mind: such as the amount of time, type of organization, location, approx. amount of people, and any specific requirements.

I'm based in the Saint Louis area now. I provide facilitated drum circles for various groups, events & parties. My rates are very competitive. They include the equipment, loading, set-up, facilitating the drum circle, and one hour travel both ways. It may seem like it costs a lot, but a one hour drum circle can take up to 4 hours. There is the loading, travel, set-up, facilitating the circle, load back up, travel back, and unload to storage. Plus, the cost/wear & tear of the drums - percussion, & all those years of musical training to host drum circles.

[Testimonials, Letters of Recommendation, & Resume \(link\)](#)

Contact me:

[To Email Me With Questions](#)

Whether it is hosting, or facilitating a drum circle, I do the very best I can to help really make a difference. I offer something that's unique, & interactive. Everyone can be drumming in minutes no matter how shy they are!

More 101 Drum Circle Rhythms (drumcircles.net) 7 Dje...



Some More 101 Drum Circle Rhythms (drumcircles.net...







I love drumming with yoga groups, especially out in nature. We feed off of each other, and all end up in a soothing place. But the drumming is in the background, very mellow and steady, so the instructor can be heard. The drum rhythm is mostly in 4/4 time, and it morphs with the ebb and flow. The instructor guided everyone through sets of poses designed to center the mind, build heat in the body, explore strength, grace and balance. The photo of them all laying down flat is kind of funny. It looks like they were drummed into the ground.

### Drum Circle Facilitation in St. Louis [drumcircles.net](http://drumcircles.net)



I don't really get into selling drums, nor do I endorse any drum manufactures, or companies. If you're looking to buy a drum, it's important to find the one that's right for you. I am always happy to offer an opinion, or suggest a few places I've found some of mine from. If you are new to drumming, choosing a 1st drum can be a bit confusing.

On my blog, [Drum Circle Blog at blogspot.com](http://Drum Circle Blog at blogspot.com) I go into this in great detail. Please look for the post, "Choosing That First Drum To Buy". If you are looking to start a drum circle. or get into drum circle facilitating, check out my post on a few ways to get free drum circle facilitation training. Even if you have never touched a drum before, and want to start a drum circle up just for fun, it should help get you started. The way things are these days, not everyone can afford to get training, or leave the area they live in. Running a drum circle is something you can learn to do.

I hope my posts help you along with your drumming journey, and I'm here if you ever need to ask a question.

Can you drum even if you have never played one before, and think you have no rhythm at all? The answer is Yes. In a matter of a few minutes, you can be playing drum rhythms, & making some beautiful music with your hands. The nice thing about drumming, is you can begin at any age and still have fun with it. And best of all, you only have to buy a drum once, and it will last you forever if you take care of it. All most people need is one lesson, and they are off and drumming. You can enjoy drumming alone or with friends. Playing a drum feels good if you are happy or down.

Just to give you an idea, here are a few of my typical indoor and outdoor drum circle chair setups prior to starting:





I have had people tell me that they are under the impression that drum circle facilitators have to be certified. Okay, doctors, dentists, lawyers, yes. I wouldn't want to use one that hadn't gone through the process of accreditation and/or licensing. But, facilitators don't have any kind of official governing body. Anyone can decide to teach, hold workshops, etc. and then give out a certificate. But, all it means is that the person spent some money on training in one style of facilitation. Like in any other field, some are better than others. Is certification necessary to facilitate drum circles?

No. Does it help? Yes. Their logo looks good on your resume, and sure it adds some credibility to you. Most of them cost a lot also. Do you need certification by someone to work and earn a living? No. Individuals and companies both offer their own brand of facilitation. One isn't necessarily better than another, some are promoted more, and widely known than others. Practically speaking even if you are a newcomer you can buy a few books on the subject, watch a few videos, and get out there and host a drum circle just fine. I think you can learn the most just by doing, and going to some drum circles. Get out and participate, have some fun, and observe what the other facilitators do, and how they do it.



### 101 Drum Circle Rhythms DVD

An effective way to keep a drumming program, or drum circle interesting, is to have a wide variety of rhythms to draw from. My 2 hour DVD of 120 hand drum rhythms makes ideal reference material. It's \$15 and includes a free drum circle jam CD. The 120 rhythms are also on 2 audio CD's for \$10. The link is below for both of them. They are also available in mp3 format at most online retailers such as CDbaby.com for \$10, as well as iTunes, Amazon, Rhapsody, and most others.

### [2 Hour DVD 101 Drum Circle Rhythms Link](#)

### More on facilitating drum circles, or having a drumming program.

Natural rhythm flows within us all. Our hearts beat to a rhythm, we walk to a rhythm, many aspects of our daily lives are done to a rhythm. You even make love to a rhythm, (hopefully). Whenever we hear drumming, we begin to move to the universal rhythm inside us all. The drum can connect your heart to your hands, and all of a sudden you are improvising, and talking with a drum. We become the instrument, the drum becomes our voice. With drum circles we connect beyond the music being played. The nice thing about drumming is that anyone, no matter how old they are, can sit right down and have fun jamming on a drum with other people.

To briefly describe drum circle facilitation by me, it's putting a bunch of people together, & creating a band out of them. It's fun to play like a kid again for a day. Friends, strangers, co-workers, beginners, or pros...

I like to begin a drumming session by letting everyone just choose something, sit down in the circle, and start playing. This approach helps everyone to relax before the formal welcome, introductions, and then into organized rhythms. The reason I encourage everyone to play first is the nerves, and the barriers just begin to melt away. Later as the rhythms join together, everyone joins together. We join together musically. The result is there is no distinction between you or me. We just all sense the feeling of the one song we are creating in the moment. This was the tried and true approach of the elders who would begin their gatherings, and ceremonies in this fashion. They've been drumming that way for over 5000 years, so you kind of have to figure it's cool, right?

I think ideally, a fun drum circle is a bunch of drums, and then a good jam session. The emphasis with me is on having a good time. I believe in not telling people how, when, or what to play, ever. I like to focus more on self discovery. I provide the tools for you to figure out the task. Here's some of them for you to do it with:



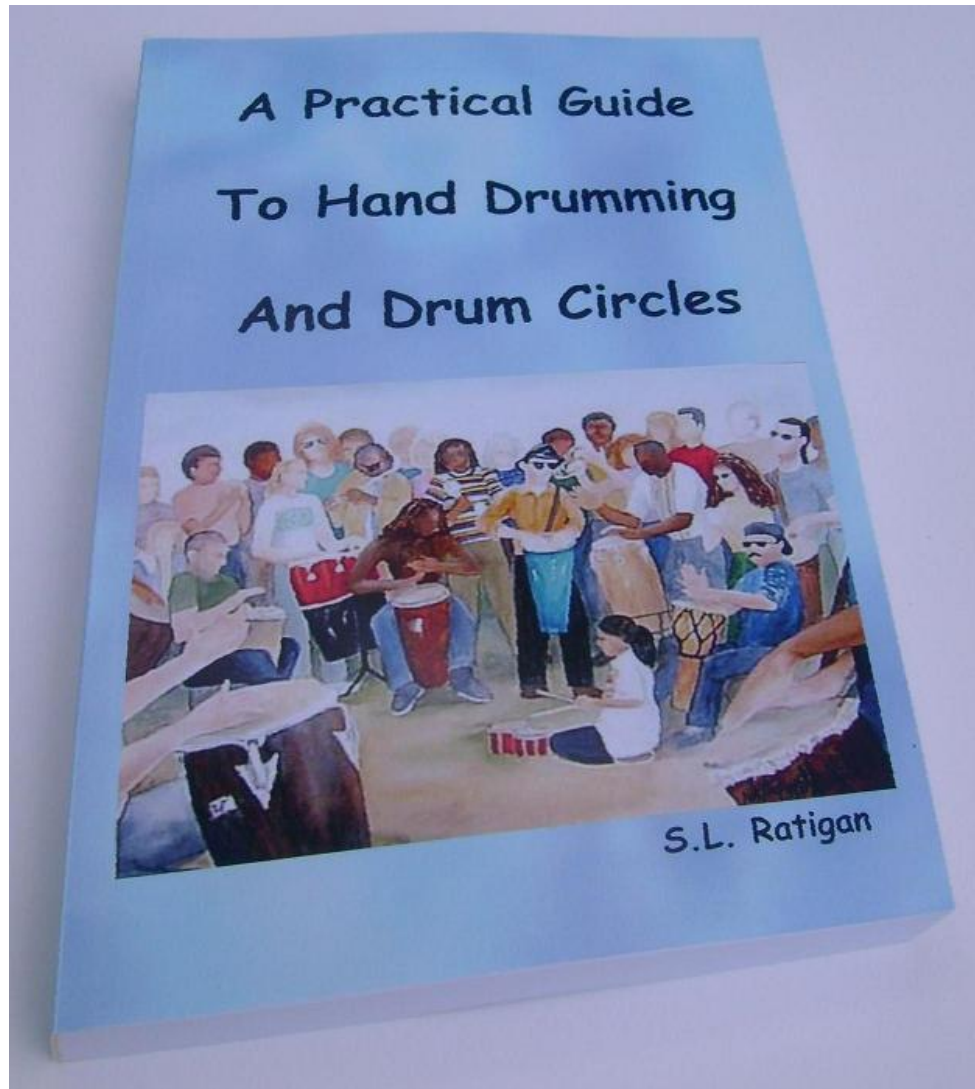
The thing some don't understand about drum circles, is that it's more about the people, than it is the drumming.

Many facilitators agree with me on this, some don't. The quality of the music produced in a drum circle isn't really based on the musical experience of the players, but on the developing quality of the relationships of the people that emerge. As a facilitator I help people to empower themselves through drumming, music, and fun. They need no experience at all to play in a drum circle. I encourage individual creativity, and group dynamics. I do 90% of my facilitating through the music. It's an artform that takes years to develop.

My book, "A Practical Guide To Hand Drumming And Drum Circles" - \$8 on Kindle or Nook



If your desire is to get much more in depth with this, please consider picking up my book. It goes into starting a drum circle, or drumming program, and how to keep it fresh and interesting for all different kinds of groups. I cover all of that, and much more in great detail. The page link for it is below.



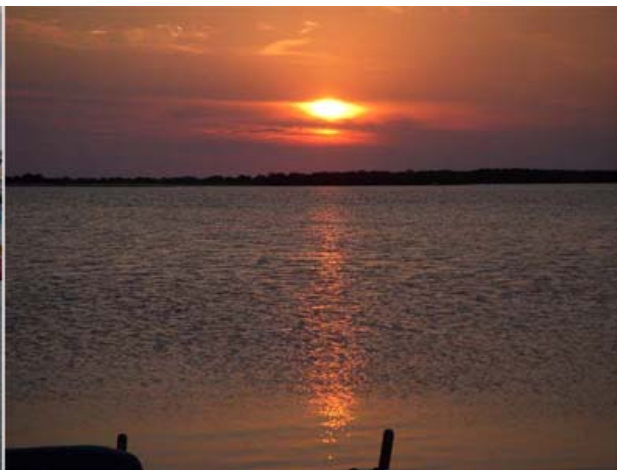
[A Practical Guide To Hand Drumming And Drum Circles Book Link](#)

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A drum circle is a rhythm based experience where a variety of world percussion hand drums from different cultures are brought together. Ethnic drumming rhythms from many different parts of the world are explored. That's part of the beauty of it. The Rhythms change, evolve and morph in a magical unpredictable way. The result is spontaneous, beautiful music created by everyone involved. It's a musical event that everyone can participate in. It's a place for everyone to express themselves with drums, and other percussion instruments. The level of experience doesn't matter. A person can participate fully, and freely, with no skill or technique at all.

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Drumming Outdoors...



Whenever it's possible, I like to host drum circles outdoors connected with nature. Nature has a natural rhythm to it, and so do we. Hand drumming brings us back to that fundamental rhythm of nature. I can help you, or your group to host a drum circle anywhere - indoors or outside.

### More About Drumming And Drum Circles...

The phrase "drum circle" is a rather broad term. It can mean a variety of things to different people. Interestingly, drum circles are never the same, even with the same group. It is always fresh, enlightening, and it's an exciting event for entire families. Here is an activity where parents and their children can do something fun together. Teens can be doing something cool - yet positive. People with disabilities can just be one of the guys at the drum circle. The feelings of fun and euphoria are hard to describe when the group dynamic is created. It only takes about ten or fifteen minutes to start happening. Drum circles are fun man! They combine recreation, with therapeutic music. I feel what works the best, is to bridge the gap between the facilitated drum circles, and the more open freestyle community drum circles. I bring you the best of both worlds. This allows individuals to experience self discovery and musicality at their own pace. Then the whole experience is much more meaningful to them, and even more effective.

Very little is planned in advance except maybe a list of rhythms to suggest. All the rest is improvised on the spot. Most of the facilitating can be done through the music. The musical communication, supporting of the beat, and ending points to a jam, are usually done with the drumming. Sometimes even transition points in the drumming just naturally occur. The recognizing, and supporting the group's expression is a key element, because, since drum circles are so organic in nature, that to an onlooker, there are times that look like absolute chaos is going on...but it's an organized chaos. It levels out into a group song, and it uniquely theirs. They created it. Usually there is a transition point, or a time to just move on to a new rhythm. It takes time to trust in the natural process of creating a group vibe. A lot of people WANT there to be lots of rules, true in business world, true in art world, so it's not surprising to find it here in the drumming world.



### Culture Day Drum Circle. Let the rhythm move you

So to try and sum up the difference: In my opinion, a freestyle or lightly facilitated drum circle is more open, improvised, and more spontaneous. Interactive drumming is more planned, structured, and directed - a little heavier in the facilitation department. It's mainly facilitated with everyone focused on following the leader's instructions. I think as soon as you start to present rhythm games or activities, it's no longer a drum circle but, an interactive drumming thing. And that's ok and all. But people are now following instructions, and doing a more structured activity other than improv. I think a little of both of these styles makes it the most enjoyable drum circle experience overall.

One way to get established is to be visible in your community. Get a weekly circle started at a cafe, night club, museum, yoga, recreation art center. At city parks, even at the beach. Try to get any venue you can think of. A weekly circle is better than monthly, because people tend to forget what week it is being held. You may only make \$100 a circle, a commission, tips, or even need to do it for free, but it will give you a home base, plus you will be doing something positive for your community. It may take 4 or 5 circles to get things rolling, but once you do, medical professionals, event planners, and even the media will eventually find you. That leads to higher paying gigs. You might even get jobs working for your city, or county at festivals, etc. Also, visit your local chamber of commerce, and/or arts center to see if they can be of any help.

Another way many facilitators earn a decent living is to approach your city, county, state arts council. Depending on the city you live in, they can possibly hook you up with city events, festivals, art shows, and even get work in the school system. If another drum circle facilitator gets to your arts council before you, that can be a problem. Some end up getting non profit corporations going. They get donations from local businesses, and make a nice living that way. Some medical, special needs facilities, and schools can apply for grants to help you to fund your work, but you may have to work for free for awhile in order to prove yourself first. Try things like your chamber of commerce, and etc. Be creative in thought.





### And The Beat Goes On...Boom ShaKa La Ka

The techniques and skills needed to host a drum circle for a particular group can be taught, if you want them. And that is one of the key things I like to do when I'm hired to host a drum circle for you. I can show you and the staff how to continue the process on your own when you feel you are ready to take over. It's not necessary to have any musical training in order to learn the essential basics, although those who have a musical background do have an edge. I do this at no cost beyond what I am being paid to facilitate a drum circle. Drum circles need to be customized sometimes, to fit the particular needs of the people, or group it's being held for.

I have worked with everything from highly professional musicians, to adults and children with mental or physical restrictions. And, each individual group needs a slightly different approach, since everyone has their own skills, limitations, and quirks. It can take anywhere from just a single drum circle to as many as four to work out the ideal approach for a specific group. However, I never require any kind of contract beyond a single day at a time. In addition to demonstrating how to host a drum circle by my doing it, I am happy to spend some time with the staff to answer questions and help them to work out their own way of facilitating for their own group as soon as possible. I provide drum rhythms CD's - DVD's and drumming rhythms notations as reference material, free of charge. I'm also happy to share with you the various places I buy my drums from.

Different types of drums work for different types of people.



It doesn't matter whether or not the music itself sounds good, although it usually does. What matters is letting the participants know they can just be themselves and find their own inner rhythms. By letting people discover themselves, and knowing they have the freedom to make mistakes, takes them on a journey where I only act as a sort of a tour guide, and they find that feeling of safety from being in a community made up of the other drummers. I help to provide that by being constantly tuned in to the group and the individuals, so they can have a good time. Helping someone who says, "I have no rhythm" to find their own inner sense of rhythm takes very little guidance and can be done spontaneously right in the middle of an ongoing beat. You can see the light turn on in their face.



2 views of a drum circle birthday party I facilitated. Cool idea!





Three views of the "Jazz on the Green" children's benefit drum circle event. Kids love drumming!



Get some hula hoops, and add hula hooping or dance to your drum circle for something to connect to.



Drum circles are great for seniors, and spiritual gatherings. Try laying down with your eyes closed for a minute in the center of the circle, and feel the energy. The beauty of drum circles is that they bring people from all paths together. I love to celebrate my spirituality by being around the positive energy of them.

Hand drumming is fun, rewarding, and can be therapeutic for everyone. From kids to elders. I am also available for private hand drumming lessons in person, in the Saint Louis area. It's even a great way to add music education for those who home school. From beginner to intermediate. All ages. \$40 for an hour no min, & personalized lessons. I provide the drums, and will travel to you, or can come over to my studio. Please email me for more info.

### The Earth Day Drum Circle at Honeymoon Island

This drum circle event was a blend of local musicians, the general community, and a special needs group. A key part of the intent of groups that are oriented toward those with physical and/or mental restrictions is finding ways to bring them into general society as much as possible. It has been my experience that drum circles are an excellent path to this goal. The guiding of a special needs group in our community led to exactly that, a two hour performance on a big stage in front of 100's of people, where they were wildly applauded, appreciated, and sounded great. It was a proud moment for them, and for me. I believe that real personal growth comes from the inner expression of each individual, and their self discovery. The photos speak for themselves.



I believe in seeing abilities in people, not disabilities. Click below for more photos, & a video set to drum circle audio.

[Earth Day Drum Circle Link](#)

A drum circle is hardly ever a professional ensemble playing prepared music, or a drumming class. It's a unique event that is created by just real people, preferably with the help of a host, or facilitator, who acts as a musical guide to make it easier for the group to achieve it's goal. I don't want you to be a drummer. I just want you to be able to enjoy drumming.

For me, this is about taking the gift of music that God gave me and sharing it with other people. One of the beautiful things about drum circles and drumming together, is that it can bring people from all different paths together, and even learn to respect each other's faith. I love to celebrate my spirituality by being around the positive energy of drum circles. Drumming brings a certain beauty into the world. And I believe I was put on this earth to share that gift.

A life is not measured by what we have, but what we give.

**A little history on hand drumming. It dates back 1000's of years.**

Community drumming has been an ancient musical tradition for 1000's of years in almost every part of the world. Drum playing is probably as old as intelligent man. Cavemen probably jammed on wooden logs. The idea of banging on something to make noise is second nature to us. As for me, my parents got me my first drum so I would stop making drums out of things in the kitchen.

As far as I could tell, the oldest recorded drum discovery is from 6000 BC excavated from a Neolithic Era archeological dig. Small drums used for ceremonies have been found in Egyptian tombs. See that? King Tut was probably jamming out. Many caves in Peru contain wall carvings depicting drums in various aspects of societal life. Indian drums from the Middle East are as old as 5000 BC, and Mesopotamian ruins have yielded cylindrical drums as old as 3000 BC. Native American Indians have a rich history with drums made of gourds, and wood for celebrations, ceremonies, and music. Many of the same styles of these drums are still used to this day.

Drums and percussion were the first musical tools people made for use in group music. Drumming was used for a variety of purposes, including communication. In Africa for example, drumming was not just a form of music, it was used as a speech. A rhythmic pattern of beats played a certain way could communicate a variety of information. Drums were used for things like fertility, a new birth, healing, grieving, emotional release, various types of ceremonies, & building communities.

### What's My Role As A Drum Circle Host Or Facilitator?

I facilitate the drum circle, and provide all the necessary drums and other smaller instruments for you. All we need is some chairs, and shade. My fee is for the cost of the equipment, wear and tear, and the hauling of all the drums. The playing part I pretty much do for free. Because I love doing this. It's that simple. I was hoping I had you sold on the idea by now, but here it is again in a little bit more detail. Some people think the drums just magically appear, and they can play them.

Trust me, they don't, and they are expensive. I provide the drums for you, and I create a welcoming, enjoyable atmosphere that helps everyone to make music together. Or simply put, to help make it easy for everyone to enjoy creating a group musical song. I'm there to help guide and make it easier to participate, not to manipulate. I'm trained to help everyone feel comfortable in the group setting, and act as a rhythm starter when needed. Then everyone begins to experience their own creativity, fun, and excitement as they begin to improvise on the support rhythm. After a brief warm up, and demonstration of some basic hand technique, a variety of easy to play along rhythms from various cultures are explored, including our own.

The chairs are arranged in concentric circles, with an arrangement of professional level drums for people to choose from. I believe everyone should experience the real thing in a musical instrument. Especially someone new to drumming. There are huge differences in sound. You can't experience the full range of sound, tones, and enjoyment on a poorly made drum. Cheap drums, give you cheap sounds. I want people to sound as good as they possibly can.



### Understanding Notated Drum Circle Rhythms & Suggesting A Drum Beat To Groups Of Drummers

There's a variety of different ways I like to use to notate a drum rhythm. It's really a matter of personal preference, and what ever you find the easiest for you to use. Here's some various ways I've seen to notate a drum rhythm. Using one of these methods, you can quickly and clearly transcribe a drum rhythm to save it for another day. The accented strokes, (or slaps) are all in caps. Most rhythms at drum circles are in 4/4 time, or 6/8 time.

Here's an example with the basic "Fanga" drum rhythm in 4/4 time notated a few different ways:

Gun go-do-go Gun-Dun go-Do (Also, pa & ta are used in some rhythms.)  
(As far as I know, a style taught by Babatunde Olatunji. Probably the most common, and well known method.)

Doum tek-ka-tek Doum-Doum tek-Ka (Middle Eastern style)  
(or in shorthand = D t-k-t D-D t-K)

Boom chickaChick Boom-Boom chicKa

B o-o-o B-B o-O

Bass=B, Slap=S, Rim Shot=R, Open Tone=O, Closed Tone=C, Muffled Bass=M (I don't use this one very much)

If it's dark, and I'm in a hurry, which is usually the case: I use Morse Code \_ ... \_.

I've seen some others use this method: R l-r-l R-L r-L

Or, very basic: B= bass tone, T= tone note, S= slap note, lower case letter for softer tones.

Jazz scatting - Just write down what it sounds like.

Boom sha-ka-la Boom-Boom sha-Ka, or Ba-Dum BaDay Ba-Dum BaDum, etc. Maybe even make up your own method.



When I'm suggesting a rhythm to play, I like to vocalize the first few bars of it before I begin playing it, & I start it out very slowly, then I can gradually bring it up to the desired tempo (speed) once they are comfortable with it. I always mention that this is just a starting point, and you don't have to play this support rhythm, play whatever you feel fits.

Interestingly, I've found that most people can wrap their heads around it quicker if I vocalize sounds with a "K" in them. ie: Boom chicka-boom Chick. Or, Doum tekka-doum Tek. Or, I just "scat" them out jazz style any way I can think of.

Another idea is drumming to common word phrases, rhymes or well known commercial jingles to get things rolling. ie: "Yum, Yum, tastes like chic-ken" (D, D, t k t-k) or try "pep-per-oni-Piz-Za" (t-k-t-k D D) 2 bass, 4 tones.

### Printable Reading Drum Music, Notated Drum Rhythms & Facilitating Set List

These are lists of various drum circle rhythms I enjoy playing. It's my interpretation of them. There's a few different ways I like to notate, and/or vocalize the start of a drum circle rhythm. Print it out if you want to. I like to help people enjoy drumming more. The lists might make a good guideline, set list, or help you to read, notate, and/or teach drum rhythms. Check them both out. 4 & 7 pages, Microsoft Word (.doc) Here:

[Printable - Various Ways to Read, Notate, and Teach Drum Music \(word.doc\)](#)

[Printable - Longer List Of Drum Circle Rhythms & Set List\(word.doc\)](#)

When I'm working with beginners I like to use this style, and explain the different sounds like this:

Doum (D) – Right hand, clear, low tone, (from center of drum – like you're bouncing a basketball, or on a trampoline)

Tek (t) & Ka (k) – Right & Left hand, crisp high tone (sharply striking the edge of the drum head) I've heard some say to pretend like you are hitting the bottom of a hot frying pan or stove burner. I don't like to say that, because right away, it associates drumming with pain. That's not something I want to do, especially with beginners.

Tek (T) - is usually played with the dominant hand. Reverse hands if you are left-handed, like me.  
The accented strokes (or slaps) are in caps.

I hope this helps you to notate rhythms a little faster, & makes it a little easier to suggest rhythms to your group.



More On Hand Drumming, Drum Circle Advice, And Opinions



Well, I do have a 300 page book for sale on these subjects. It would help out if you bought it from me, but I'm happy to offer any advice, or give my opinion, and answer questions on anything hand drumming, or drum circle related.

I teach 1 on 1 hand drumming lessons a lot. I think more important than the lessons, is finding the right drum for yourself. One that's right for your hands, for your body, & your soul. I heard someone else say, "You need to find that soulmate drum." That is so right. Many of us buy drums for years before finding it. No matter what your musical skill level is, 90% of the people I work with only actually need one drumming lesson to get them started and off on their drumming journey. But it's more important that they find the proper drum that is right for them. Different styles of drums work for different kinds of people. There is one out there that's right for you, or someone you know. I am more than happy to give you my opinion on what might be the right drum for you. My DVD or CD of rhythms is an ideal resource to practice with. Then it's off to the drum circle where you get the very best drumming lessons. Just learn from watching what the others do. That's how many of us got started.

If you live out of the St. Louis area, and need some advice, suggestions, ideas, or anything at all about hosting any form of drum circle, I am more than happy to try and help you along. I like to try and give back a little, and help anyone in the drumming community. If you look around my site, you will find lots of ideas and helpful information. Even if you aren't sure what kind of drum might be right for you, or your group, just email me and I will try to help you along. I don't sell many drums, but I do have years of experience with most major brands, styles, and retailers. I can recommend the places to you that I buy mine from. If you are wanting to host or facilitate drum circles, I think this art form has evolved a lot in the last ten years alone. All art forms can be very subjective. There used to be only one or two recognized accepted ways to facilitate drum circles. Now there are dozens of styles all around the world, because this is an ever evolving art form.

### My Biography



I've been a performing artist for most of my life. I've been playing the drums since 1968. My love for drumming started as an outlet for childhood hyperactivity, and I went on to be the lead snare drummer in the school marching band, then on to be a symphony percussionist.

After moving to Florida in 1975, I played percussion in various bands and orchestras, toured and recorded with a number of them, plus worked as a session musician.

I also started my acting career while in Florida. I moved to New York briefly, then on to Los Angeles, where, for 15 years, I worked as a musician, and a character actor. I appeared in a number of TV shows, films, and commercials. I was also a frequent guest performer on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno" for 8 seasons. I'm a member of AFTRA/SAG, the two major performing arts unions that merged into one.

I've been attending - facilitating drum circles, and training drum circle facilitators for over 30 years. I think it helps to keep me sane. I've facilitated drumming events for the U.S. ARMY Chief Of Chaplains Religious Education Conference, Jazz Festivals, County State Fairs, The Florida Festivals & Events Association's Convention Trade Show, as well as many other major groups and companies, including OSI Restaurant Partners, Outback, on over to smaller groups, such as churches, veterans, college sorority reunions, weddings, seniors, schools, and special needs groups. I was also a faculty member who taught drumming at The Dunedin Fine Arts Center.

My mission statement is: To help people discover their own sense of rhythm, at their own pace.



I've got some ink in my blood. Both my adoptive, and biological parents were writers, so it was important to me to write a good book in their honor. I have published two books available on Kindle (both in book share). One on drumming, & drum circles. The other book is about me in the acting business. I'm also a contributing author in a few other books, & various newspapers. I've released a hand drum rhythms instructional DVD, and multiple CD's worldwide.

The title of the drumming book is, "A Practical Guide To Hand Drumming And Drum Circles". It's 300 pages of text, retails for \$17.95 (physical copies) and on Kindle instantly for \$8. It is self-published, and only available for purchase new directly from me here, or on Amazon.

Many musicians and other artists cross over into the acting business, like I did. If the acting field is something you might be interested in, please check out my other book, "An Actor's Face, Audition, Casting Advice, And Anecdotes From A Working Actor". It's 240 pages, and priced right, at \$4.99 (Also on Amazon Kindle.).

My website started as a drum circle article back in 1997 in the Santa Monica Outlook, LA Times, and just grew up from there. Scope out my site's global drum circle finder, and locate drum circles near you. Even just as an observer, it is an interesting social activity. Please also consider my 2 hour DVD "101 Drum Circle Rhythms" (\$16 on Amazon). Thanks in advance for considering my books / DVD / CD's, and for helping to support an independent artist.

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### Drum Circle Finder - Locate A Drum Circle Near You

Find a drum circle near you in the USA, and Worldwide with my drum circle finder. 1000's of drum circles listed around the globe. It's a free service to the drumming and dancing community. I established it back in 1999.

Drum circles are becoming more popular, there's probably a few in your state. The drum circle finder is updated monthly.

[USA Drum Circle Finder Link](#)

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Visit my [drumcircles.net](https://www.facebook.com/drumcircles.net) FaceBook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/drumcircles.net>

There's a few more rhythm ideas below, like the backyard drum circle video.

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[Check Out My Drum Circle Blog.](#)

Lots of Helpful hints, ideas, suggestions, stories, and drumming tips. Drum circle rhythm notations, and much more.

Some of the topics include: Choosing that first djembe drum. Improving your drum circle facilitating or hosting style on a budget. Ways to get the word out and promote your drum circle. Trying to earn a living hosting drum circles. What that first drum circle was really like. Various ways to notate, vocalize, and start a drum circle rhythm. Reading written drum music. A long list of notated rhythms to try out in different styles. Drumming Via Webcam, And With Special Needs Kids. The 3 lyric Version Of Fanga. How to start up a drum circle. The social, physical & mental benefits of drum circles. Choosing a first drum for your child, various ways to get free drum circle facilitation experience. Drumming in the Winter, and Summer. Tuning a lug tuned djembe, conga, or doumbek, and replacing a drum head. Ways to mark your drum. Finding a good doumbek drum on a budget, and ways to tell the quality of them. Tips on sitting in with bands and drumming groups, & learning to play by ear. My latest post is on special needs drum circles, & those with disabilities. Plus lots more to help you enjoy drumming more. I try to post something new each month.

[Drum Circle Blog at blogspot.com](http://drumcircles.net/blogspot.com)

Check out my drumcircles.net Twitter Feed: @drumcircles I try to put interesting stuff out there.

Follow @drumcircles

My Flickr Photostream, A whole bunch of pretty good drum circle and dancer photos:

[drumcircles.net Flickr Photostream](http://drumcircles.net/flickr-photostream)

Check out my SoundCloud music page, lots of cool drum circle jams & strange ones also:

[drumcircles.net SoundCloud page](http://drumcircles.net/soundcloud-page)

A few cool drumming videos of mine, & quite a few from other people, at my YouTube channel:

[drumcircles.net at YouTube](http://drumcircles.net/youtube)

Check out the drumcircles.net MySpace page. I haven't checked it in years. You probably shouldn't either.

[drumcircles.net on MySpace](http://drumcircles.net/myspace)

My 101 Drum Circle Rhythms DVD is also available as an instant download at Amazon.com (\$8)

An effective way to keep a drumming program, or drum circle interesting, is to have a wide variety of rhythms to draw from. My 2 hour hand drum rhythms video makes ideal reference material. It's \$15 and includes a free drum circle jam CD. You can also pick it up at Amazon.com for \$14 but no free CD is included. Great for the iPad, tablet, or phone.

The 120 rhythms are also on 2 audio CD's for \$10. The link below is for both of them. They are also available in mp3 format at most online retailers such as CDbaby.com for \$10, as well as iTunes, Amazon, Rhapsody, and most others.

[2 Hour DVD 101 Drum Circle Rhythms Link](http://drumcircles.net/2-hour-dvd-101-drum-circle-rhythms-link)

Check out 14 drum circle rhythms in these YouTube videos. Please keep in mind that this is only 14 minutes from my two hour DVD. The DVD title is 101 Drum Circle Rhythms. Actually, there is 120 of them, but who's counting. I hope you enjoy one or two, and these

help to get you in the groove. On the DVD there are lots of fun ethnic drum beats from around the world to explore, have fun with, & make them your own. Over 2 hours of them will keep you in the drumming mood for a long time. Each rhythm is about a minute long.

### More 101 Drum Circle Rhythms (drumcircles.net) 7 Dje...



### Some More 101 Drum Circle Rhythms (drumcircles.net...



As an independent artist, money is tight, so I always appreciate a product that is a good value for the cost. That's the idea behind my book, DVD, and CD's. If you choose to purchase something from me, thanks in advance for helping out with drum repairs, and expenses. (Please visit the links to see my DVD, CD's, 300 page book, "A Practical Guide To Hand Drumming And Drum Circles".

Here's the Kindle link:

[Drum Circle Book On Amazon Kindle \\$8](#)

### "This Is Your Brain On Drums" My Interview about drum circles on AM Talk Radio

Would a board certified neurologist really prescribe drum circles for some of his patients? Yep.

Listen to this past national AM radio syndicated broadcast of the Healthy Talk Radio Show, featuring Deborah Ray,



Neurologist Doctor Hammesfahr, and myself, to find out why. It's interesting to hear his perspective on drum circles and their benefits. (It's 55 minutes long -- a 25MB mp3)

This is follow up interview number 2, taped a few months later, (posted below this one). This interview features Doctor Knaus, Doctor Hammesfahr, and myself. We discuss the benefits of therapeutic drumming, and how it can bring you back to the rhythm of nature, and the earth. We also talk about the resonant frequency of the planet, the human brain, and how similar they are. It's a pretty fascinating interview. (It's 30 minutes long -- a 12MB mp3)

[Drum Circle Talk on AM Talk Radio download](#)

[Drum Circle Talk on AM Talk Radio download Part 2](#)

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I hope you enjoyed reading my page, and if you facilitate drum circles, some of my methods and writing helps you.

Please email me with any questions. My rates are reasonable. I never share email addresses with anyone.

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The proceeds from the sales of my drumming CD's, DVD's, and drum circle book helps me to do this kind of work in our community, and keep the website going. I try to provide them at as reasonable a cost as possible. As an independent artist, money is tight, so I always appreciate a product that is a good value for the cost. That's the idea behind my book, CD's and DVD.

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There is increasing recognition of the health benefits of music therapy, particularly facilitated hand drumming. Below I offer my drum circle book, 101 rhythms DVD, and drum circle jam music for sale. Unfortunately, places where the people who benefit from what I do the most, have very limited budgets. I've never recieved any grants, assistance, or funding, and I don't endorse drum companies.

If you would be willing to make a purchase of any amount to help me continue to provide therapeutic music to groups in St. Louis, it would help out a little. Please click on the purchase links below. Thanks in advance if you can pitch in a little. My book & DVD are solid if you are facilitating drum circles, or thinking about starting one up for your area, or group.

My 101 Drum Circle Rhythms video on Amazon. Over 2 hours of them. The full download to 2 devices is \$8. Here's the link, or search on the title. 101 Drum Circle Rhythms (The DVD disc is a few bucks more.)

[101 Drum Circle Rhythms Download Link](#)

My 300 page drum circle book: "A Practical Guide Hand Drumming and Drum Circles" is also \$8.

[Drum Circle Book On Amazon Kindle](#)

CdBaby link (Digital drum circle jam music) - They have "Wild Drum Circles" (Not on iTunes yet)

[Drum Circle Music Download at CD Baby](#)

iTunes link (Most of my digital drum circle music)

[Drum Circle Jam Music at iTunes](#)



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Some timeless quotes by Babatunde Olatunji:  
 "I am the drum...you are the drum...we are the drum..." -- Babatunde Olatunji

"Rhythm is the soul of life. The whole universe revolves in rhythm. Everything & every human action revolves in rhythm."  
 -- Babatunde Olatunji

"Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. And today? Today is a gift. That's why we call it the present."  
 -- Babatunde Olatunji

"A Drum in Every Kitchen!" -- Babatunde Olatunji

"The evocative power of the drum can be compared to the Trinity. The drum's frame comes from the trunk of a tree, and that tree has a spirit. It is not dead wood. There is also spirit in the animal skin. If there wasn't, it would not produce sound. Those, plus the spirit of the person playing become an irresistible force."  
 -- Babatunde Olatunji

"Whether you realize it or not, we are engaging in a cultural revolution. We are bringing people from all levels of life, understanding and background together. That's the wonderful thing about drumming." --Babatunde Olatunji

"Drumming is the simplest thing that we can do to bring us together." -- Babatunde Olatunji

"The Creator wants us to drum. He wants us to corrupt the world with drum, dance and chants. After all, we have already corrupted the world with power and greed....which hasn't gotten us anywhere - now's the time to corrupt the world with drum, dance and chants." -- Babatunde Olatunji



Drum Circle & Bellydance Goodies at CafePress.com

Lots of great looking drum circle & belly dance merchandise at our [cafePress.com](http://cafePress.com) shops. Plenty of fun items starting at \$5. Choose from various items of clothing, shirts, hats, posters, coffee cups, calendars, gift cards, prints, stickers, iPad iPhone cases, and lots more with one of these images on them. They are copyrighted original watercolor art by my wife. Makes a great gift for loved ones, or your favorite dancer or drummer. There's more cool stuff at our 5 shops.



["Hafia Bellydancing Watercolor Painting" Items at CafePress.com Link](#)



["Drum Circle Watercolor Painting" Merch at CafePress.com Link](#)

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[Drum Rhythm CD's, Drum Circle Finder, & More](#)

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Got a comment, or a question about something drumming related? Email me below. I respect your privacy, and I never give email addresses out to anyone. It may take me a day or so to get back to you, but I will.

Contact Email: [drumcircles\\_net@hotmail.com](mailto:drumcircles_net@hotmail.com) (or, click the link below.)

[Link To Email Me With Questions, Or Comments](#)

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